

PROGRAM:	DATE:
CBS SPECIAL Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00149R000200910026-5	1 February 1966
STATION OR NETWORK:	TIME:
CBS Television	10:00 P.M.

**SENATOR FULBRIGHT--ADVISE AND DISSENT**

**ANNOUNCER:** As part of its continuing coverage of the Viet Nam question, CBS News presents: Fulbright--Advise and Dissent. Senator J. William Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and an outspoken critic of the Administration's policy in Viet Nam, is questioned in this recorded interview by CBS News Correspondents Eric Sevareid and Martin Agronsky. First, Mr. Agronsky.

**MARTIN AGRONSKY:** Senator, do you feel the policy the President is following now in Viet Nam now is a wise one?

**SENATOR J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT:** Well, with respect to the referral to the United Nations, I certainly do; under the circumstances, I think this is the best thing he could do. I have already expressed my reservations about resuming bombing. I think this was too bad. I wish he'd been more patient about resuming bombing. I don't think that helps it. But in any case, he's done that, and I don't wish to quarrel about it. I think we have to accept it. But I do approve of going to the United Nations. I know there's much skepticism about its operating, but the circumstances have changed since that was last discussed, and I'm hopeful, surely, that they will do something in the United Nations.

**ERIC SEVAREID:** Senator Fulbright, you've spent a great part of your life studying American foreign policy and the history thereof. We're now suggesting arbitration of this war. Has this country ever agreed before in a war to submit to arbitration by others?

**FULBRIGHT:** I don't recall it. I must say, I wouldn't want to pose as the kind of expert your first statement supposes. I've spent most of my time in public life studying the problems of Arkansas, and foreign relations are just one of my duties. Nevertheless, I know of no precedent for that, but I think it's a good one under these circumstances. It's progressed to the point where we've created this South Vietnamese government and we're committed to it

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by reiteration of the word commitment -- I find it very difficult to find any what I call legal commitment through treaty basis, the usual kind of commitment that we have in NATO, for example -- I find it very difficult. The explanation that SEATO is the origin of this leaves me very cold -- I'm very dubious about the validity of these arguments about our commitments. It's a commitment largely by reiteration of the word that we're committed -- it's a self-generating commitment. But there we are. And therefore I have to modify my feeling to the extent that I'd like to cooperate in getting out of this. It does me no good really, to say we shouldn't have been there. I'm trying to explain why there is so much feeling about this -- it's very unusual under these circumstances.

SEVAREID: Senator, do you feel that what President Johnson has been doing in the last year in Viet Nam is in consistent line with the so-called commitments of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy?

FULBRIGHT: President Johnson, in all honesty, inherited this situation. It had become quite substantial when he came on the scene, and he was presented with a very difficult situation. There were as many as I recall it, about 20,000 of our people there in the time of the Tonkin incident, but substantial, but nothing like now. I regret that the President ever started the bombing, and that much greater efforts -- this offensive for peace which has just been held -- I regret it wasn't engaged in before we ever became involved -- but that's hindsight. I don't wish to be too critical, goodness knows that's a difficult job, and he inherited a very difficult situation, and I don't think it's profitable or helpful to be too critical of that period now, and I have to say myself that I've played a part in that, that I'm not at all proud of.

And at the time of the Bay of Tonkin, I should have had greater foresight in the consideration of that resolution -- that would have been a good time to have precipitated a debate, and a re-examination, re-evaluation of our involvement, and under the influences that existed then -- it was during just the beginning of the presidential campaign -- I was very much a partisan in that campaign, for Johnson, for the Administration. I disapproved of the statements of Goldwater, and I went along with the urging, I may say, of the Administration. I think it's a terrible situation that we're in -- I'm hoping we can find an honorable way out of it. I do not wish to see this escalate into a war -- I do not believe in the Secretary's theory that this should be the proper place for a confrontation, to destroy forever the idea that the wars of liberation can succeed. It seems to me not an appropriate place for that. I think that if you're ever going to have it -- I hope we don't ever have it -- I'm not for any confrontation of that sort, of violence, but even if you

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should have it, this is a very bad place, and very bad circumstances. That's why I think this history is significant -- we shouldn't ever have a confrontation where there is any doubt about the justification for our particular part at that time, that particular incident.

SEVAREID: Well the Secretary of State, Senator, seems to equate Communist China with Hitler's Germany of the Thirties -- that is he feels this is basically an aggressive force that unless one stops them at an early stage, as in Viet Nam now, thinking again of Hitler's course of action, that you will end up with a great big war -- that it will all get out of hand. Do you subscribe to that analogy?

FULBRIGHT: I'm afraid I do not -- I do not. This is a very complicated situation. In the first place I think we have come to grossly exaggerate at least the present power of China to carry a war beyond her borders, from a logistical point of view -- naval, modern weapons and so on. She has great vast armies -- it would be a terrible mistake to invade her, as the Japanese proved, and nearly everyone else has proved -- and I think you'd agree to that. But I do not equate her with Hitler.

China has a history that is quite different. Actually, if you want to go into this, I think that the Chinese have every reason to hate the West -- the history of Western treatment of China, beginning certainly with the Opium Wars is a most disgraceful period of any I can think of in our history. They have all of the furious feelings, hatred for the West -- what we should be doing, is try to find ways to rectify the terrible wrongs that we and all the other Western countries have inflicted on China. This is imbedded in them.

It reminds me a little bit of the feelings of the South after reconstruction, if I may use an illustration. These things get in people's blood -- it takes time to get over it, and the Chinese talk very bad, they are very offensive. But coming back to Viet Nam, I don't want to be too critical of it -- as I said, I've admitted that I have made a mistake -- I wasn't conscious of this. I'm not an expert on this area, and perhaps I have no business talking about it, but you've asked me to come here and talk about it, and in my position of Chairman, I feel I can't refuse -- I don't profess to be any great expert on it. When I'm asked to say something, I feel I ought to. This is more a feeling than it is an intellectual analysis of all these elements. There's much about this I don't know.

When they say only the President has the information to make a decision in many respects, that's right -- but we have to give advice. I think the advice that the Constitution contemplated for

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us is to reflect the common man's feeling about what he does know about these things, by instinct. But the great United States -- this enormously powerful country, becoming involved on the basis we did here, and taking it out on a little country of -- whatever it is -- 14 million people, to prove some vast point, of the success of the communist plot, as they call it -- is not very becoming to us. If we want to confront, if we really are confronting China -- if this is really a threat, why don't we attack China or Russia, have it out with someone our own size?

SEVAREID: You certainly don't advocate that?

FULBRIGHT: I do not -- of course I don't. I don't even advocate attacking North Viet Nam. I don't at all. I think our whole purpose of policy should be the other way -- I think we should try to find -- and we can afford it -- this business of our prestige, to me doesn't appeal at all. If any country could ever afford to withdraw, let's say, or to mediate, or conciliate, be conciliating, in this case -- we can -- nobody is going to think we're a paper tiger because we make a settlement here.

After all, the Russians have withdrawn, in several instances, and nobody ever thought they were no longer of any account in the world, that they're a paper tiger, as they say. They withdrew from (Pocalla?) -- I don't know all the circumstances, they withdrew; they got out of Austria, after long travail; and they got out of Azerbaijani, they got out of Cuba -- why didn't they stand up and say, our prestige is involved, these Americans can't push us around, and by gads we'll have it out. I'm glad they did. I think they were wrong in going there, but this has some bearing on it. United States isn't going to lose, on the contrary, I think we'd gain a lot of stature if we were wise and magnanimous, in seeking a settlement of this, and I hope it will come out of the United Nations.

AGRONSKY: Senator, the whole thrust of your observations seems to be that we haven't been sincerely seeking a settlement. Do you feel that we've been hypocritical about that?

FULBRIGHT: Well, you don't want me to make personal comments about our officials -- I don't think that's a proper question for me to say hypocritical -- I would question wisdom, and I think this is legitimate always, I mean as a representative of the people of Arkansas, it's my duty, within what little information and judgment I have, to try to use it, and I do question the judgment in this instance, and I think we were misled by this preoccupation with what has been called so often the international conspiracy of communism. Many people still use this, completely ignoring the split between the various countries -- they say that's not true, it's just a trick to trick us, to mislead us, and we have much of

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that left, and I don't minimize the danger of a country like Russia -- the eventual danger, China. And now is the time to try to get this back on the track so that when China does become a very powerful country, with the capacity for aggression, beyond her borders, that she won't still be of the disposition to do so. That ought to be our objective.

SEVAREID: Senator, you say you're questioning only the wisdom of these policies, but you have questioned more than that in the past. You have said, in the connection of the Dominican intervention that the government has not been candid with the American people -- they haven't come clean with us. Senator Morse said the other day that if the files of your Foreign Relations Committee were opened, people would be surprised at what they had, I assume, not been told. What do you feel about it?

FULBRIGHT: Well now, these are two different ones. I don't want to get to generalizing too much. In the case of the Dominican Republic, I think it is very clear that there was a difference in the announced objective of the intervention, and the real objective of the intervention. That's the closest that I can think of, of being a diversion between the fact and the stated fact. In the case of the briefings that have taken place over the years in regard to Viet Nam, my best guess is that those who briefed us erroneously, were themselves misled and didn't understand the situation. I mean I cannot believe that people like McNamara, who is one of the principal briefers, and Taylor -- these are men that I think are of the highest integrity -- I wouldn't for a moment try to insinuate that they would try to mislead us -- I don't think so. I think they are very fine men, I mean I have the greatest respect for them.

And I think that for reasons I don't quite understand, what they told us about the situation, the progress of the war, did not turn out to be accurate.

SEVAREID: But, Senator, this raises a very serious kind of permanent question of how our Administration actions and conclusions on the facts at any moment, to be double-checked. Maybe the press has failed. You have come in well after the fact on the Dominican Republic, and said it was wrong. You come along now, 18 months after the resolution of the Tonkin Gulf, and said that shouldn't have been done that way.

Is there a way that the Senate, for example, can be in at the take-off --

FULBRIGHT: There is no possible way for the Senate. We can't have a department of our own -- a CIA of our own, and all that -- we

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have six overworked professional staff members of my committee -- we've always traditionally relied upon the Administration, and I think we always will. I don't think it's feasible to do this. And our function isn't to duplicate the State Department, and the CIA. You will recall that there was a great outcry by the Administration against certain journalists in Viet Nam, saying they were misleading the public. Well the journalists proved to be right, I think, by the course of events.

The same way in the Dominican Republic. In my view many of the reports of what took place, by journalists, proved to be more accurate than some of the official reports. I don't know how this happens -- or why --

SEVAREID: What good is the advice of the Senate, if it is always well after the facts, and too late. What's wrong with the mechanism?

FULBRIGHT: It isn't much good, I don't think in many cases -- we usually go along with the Administration, as I say, as a kind of a general conscience of the people I suppose. I can't recall many great contributions made to the foreign policies of this country. I can recall the Senate's action on the League of Nations, which I think was a disaster, and they don't always do right, and I may not be correct in my judgment either. I try to be restrained about it.

AGRONSKY: Senator Fulbright, North Viet Nam has declared today that it would consider any resolutions the UN Security Council, on Viet Nam, as invalid, and insist that we must go back to the 1954 Geneva convention.

FULBRIGHT: Well, as a matter of fact, I have suggested, as others, that at the reconvening of the Geneva conference, under the chairmanship of Great Britain and Russia, would be an appropriate way to approach this matter. President Johnson has from time to time stated the Geneva accords as the basis for negotiation, the starting place to see if we could reach a settlement, so that if that's the way they wish it, and they're willing to participate, and the co-chairmen are willing to call it, this would seem to me to be a very good recommendation of the Security Council. The Security Council, as I understand it, has a free rein, to recommend whatever they think might bring these parties together and have negotiations, so I would see nothing wrong with that. I regret that they refuse to come to the UN -- I would prefer, now that it's started, that they come to the UN, and make their own case, even if that's the result. I think it's terrible that they're so contemptuous of the UN -- I don't approve of that at all, but we're dealing with a fact,

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and if this is the only way to get it, I see nothing particularly wrong, because this has been advocated.

In fact we urged the calling, the re-convening of it -- the British I think proposed it, and the Russians refused -- this was a year or two ago, if my memory serves me right.

AGRONSKY: You've repeatedly called for the involvement of the Viet Cong. Do you think they should be involved in this instance again?

FULBRIGHT: It would seem to me that this is a purely practical matter, not a theoretical one, that they are the army in being -- we are told that they have somewhere in the neighborhood of 236 to 250,000 men, which is the core of the fighting in South Viet Nam. They are the (rebel?) so to speak against the regime which we support, the key regime -- I would think they were a proper party to a negotiation, because if you negotiate over their heads, you arrive at agreements that they're not involved in, they can keep on fighting. This could be a futile thing.

AGRONSKY: You feel we must accept the Viet Cong participation to end this thing?

FULBRIGHT: I believe that it's necessary, because they're the boys doing the fighting. They have the guns -- they're killing our people, and that's where you want to start. If you have a cease-fire, who do you have a cease-fire with? Do you have it with Hanoi, or do you have it with the Viet Cong? Directly -- the theory of the Administration seems to be that Hanoi absolutely controls it all -- I'm not sure this is clear. These people that are doing the fighting in the field, I'm sure they are allied with them -- they undoubtedly take advice and orders from General (Chiat?) because he's a superior kind of a director, but they also have a being of their own, they have representatives abroad. It could well be these people haven't tasted to some degree of control of their own affairs, might like it, and they might like to -- in fact it might be wise to try to develop a little more division between the Viet Cong and Hanoi, I think it might serve our purposes.

SEVAREID: Senator, the Russians apparently are moving into North Viet Nam a little bit more all the time. Much talk of putting in sophisticated weapons. They seem to want to get into a position politically between the Chinese and Ho Chi Minh's regime, to become the dominant foreign influence with Hanoi. Isn't it possible that as time goes by, and this war is still on, that a settlement really is going to be made between us and the Soviet Union?

FULBRIGHT: I think they ought to be involved. They are a great power, in that area -- not only that area -- but in the world, and I think they ought to be involved, and therefore I am

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very much in favor of that. I think it would be a good thing. My guess is -- and it is purely a guess of course -- that on balance they would rather like to see this settled before it gets out of hand. Why else did they become -- inject themselves, apparently successfully in the controversy between Pakistan and India? Some of our best advisers in their professional (extent?) said that was utterly utterly impossible that the Russians could do anything, it was just a propaganda gesture -- but it worked.

SEVAREID: Senator Fulbright, the Secretary of State has said recently that he thinks the world on the whole is further away from the danger of nuclear war than it has been in the past. I take it you don't agree with that?

FULBRIGHT: I don't think human nature has gone through any great change in recent years. I think we're subject to many of the same ills that have afflicted us from the beginning. It's going to take some very major and persistent effort on the part of wise leaders to make a change in the kind of instinct, feelings, emotions, and so on that have resulted in wars before. This is why I've had such great hopes that our country, with this unprecedented economic power, physical power, invulnerable in a sense, insofar as you can accept nuclear weapons, to so many things that afflicted other countries, and no real ambitions. . . that we might play a real leading role in changing the course of events that lead periodically to these wars.

I don't see any ground for the optimism that you indicate. I didn't know the Secretary had thought that -- he didn't evidence any optimism before my committee the other day, and I didn't realize that he felt we were in much better state than before.

AGRONSKY: Might the optimism not derive for the Secretary, for his feeling that the Russians also want peace?

FULBRIGHT: I don't know -- I don't recall his having stated that. I really can't read the mind of the Secretary of State. I think I'm not a very good authority --

SEVAREID: Isn't it generally true, Senator, that people responsible for the conduct of policy, like a president, or a secretary of state, just cannot afford the luxury of public pessimism?

FULBRIGHT: Well I don't know about that. It seems to me that we'd all get along better if we say what we think -- whether it's pessimistic, or optimistic, and I mentioned a moment ago -- this thing troubles me about prestige, and the nations have always been afflicted with this saving face. I can see our little countries, that are on the make and hasn't much to support it, must be very

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cautious of its dignity and so on. Our country, it seems to me, can afford to be magnanimous, where a small country cannot afford to, maybe, in the eyes of the world, and it seems that because we could do things that no other country could do, without people thinking we are degenerate, or soft, or weak, or all that sort of thing. We wouldn't lose face, we'd gain face in my opinion, if we would act wisely and magnanimously, and generously in these situations, because we can afford to.

SEVAREID: Senator Fulbright, I think we have come to the end of our allotted time here. You've been very patient, and very responsive. We'd both like to thank you very much.

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